

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION KNOX COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting

Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – November 7, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.

A Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was held on Thursday, November 7, 2019, at 5:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present: Commissioner Dorothy G. Meriwether, District #1, Commissioner Richard L. Parent, Jr., District #2 and Commissioner Sharyn L. Pohlman, District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Sheriff Tim Carroll and Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves.

Budget Committee members present: Chair Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns, Thomas Marshall, Jr. and Nick Lapham.

Others in Attendance: Wendy Roberts KLCEA Executive Committee Member, Craig Curry KLCEA Board Member, Jennifer Doherty KLCEA Program Manager, Mark Hedrich KLSW Chairman of the Board and Charles Grover Thomaston Resident.

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting

Commission Hearing Room

Thursday – November 7, 2019 – 5:00 P.M.

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| I. | 5:00 | Meeting called to order (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Richard Parent, Jr. for the Knox County Commission) |
| II. | 5:01 | Public Comment |
| III. | 5:02 | Appointment to the District 8 Budget Committee Seat
1. Appointment By Budget Committee
2. Confirmation of Appointment By Commission |
| IV. | 5:05 | Approve Minutes (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Richard Parent, Jr. for the Knox County Commission)
1. Minutes of the Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 17, 2019 – Commission only to approve.
2. Minutes of the Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 24, 2019 |
| V. | 5:10 | Budget Review
1. Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension (Pg.22)
2. Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water (Pg. 22)
3. Airport Security (Pg. 25)
4. Airport (Pgs. 23-24) |
| VI. | 5:35 | Discussion Items
1. General Discussion of the 2020 Budget |
| VII. | 5:40 | Final Vote on all Department Budgets (in preparation for Public Hearing) |
| VIII. | | Adjourn |

I. Meeting Called to Order

The November 7, 2019 Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke and Commissioner Chair Richard Parent, Jr. at 5:00 P.M.

II. Public Comment:

None.

III. Appointment to the District 8 Seat:

- *Randy Stearns made a motion to appoint Charles Grover to the District 8 Budget Committee. Barry Norris seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Dorothy Meriwether made a motion to confirm the appointment of Charles Grover to the District 8 Budget Committee. Sharyn Pohlman seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- **Administrator Hart has requested from the State to receive the oath to swear Charles Grover in. This may not arrive until the first of 2020.**

IV. Approve Minutes

1. Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 31, 2019

- *Randy Stearns made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 31, 2019. Gayle Gallant seconded the motion. A vote was taken with 7 in favor and 1 abstention. (Thomas Marshall abstained)*
- *Commissioner Meriwether made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of October 31, 2019. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- ***Please note: All votes taken at each Joint Commission & Budget Committee Budget Review Meetings on Departmental Budgets are “straw votes”, with the exception of the December 5, 2019 final vote on the 2020 Knox County Budget.***

V. Budget Review:

1. Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension:

Craig Curry KLCEA Board Member, Wendy Roberts Member KLCEA Executive Committee for KLCEA and Jennifer Doherty KLCE Program Manager spoke:

- KLCE has not asked for an increase since 2014. Through budgeting and future planning we do try to minimize costs while performing preventative and routine maintenance.
- The budget continues to go towards supporting staff salaries and program expenses.
- We house several different programs to serve the families in Knox County:
 - a) Maine Families Home Visiting – promoting safe and healthy growth and development for pregnant families, babies and young children.
 - b) 4-H Youth Development – empowers young people to reach their full potential through a wide variety of programs.
 - c) Signs of the Seasons Program – tracking change and involving citizens of all ages in many environmental concerns.
 - d) Our programs also support Fishermen and Aquaculture businesses to develop best practices and sound business plans.
- With our Maine Families Home Visiting program we serve families in Knox County and on the islands. We have three full-time family visitors for this program. We bring in \$600,000 a year to support that program with Knox County being the biggest County we serve.
- Chair Duke stated he thought Lincoln County was a shared cost.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$57,042:

In favor: 7 (Chair Duke, Barry Norris, Shawn Levasseur, Gayle Gallant, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns & Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$57,042:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Jr., Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

2. Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water

Mark Hedrich – Chairman of the Board spoke:

- Handed some information about KLSW to the Commission and Budget Committee.
- He reported that 2019 was another very successful year.
- KLSW's goals are achieved by providing conservation education materials, workshops, educational programs, technical training, woodland activities, one-on-one technical assistance to municipalities, farmer's landowners, schools, watershed associations and other organizations.
- There are a number of projects (Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation) involving evasive species, evasive plants and evasive forest insect pests. We will be receiving grant money to conduct this project.
- Have been evaluating the Personnel responsibilities to create efficiency at KLSW. Currently there are three Part-time employees, two Program Managers – one PT and one is four days a week and an Administrative Assistant. There are five volunteer Board Members and a few Associate Supervisors.
- A Budget Committee Member had a question about the handout regarding the evasive plants – how many communities are applying for grants? (These grants run about \$15-\$20 K) Mr. Hedrich stated we go out and do a survey for the person that has a problem, and write a report, and then we let them decide if they want to move forward.
- Chair Duke stated that 10% of their budget is from grants, and asked isn't that a consistent amount of money each year? Mr. Hedrich said yes it is.
- A Commissioner had a question on the grants. Is there any opportunity to get State or Federal funding on addressing the Brown Tail Moths? Mr. Hedrich stated yes, it's all part of the evasive plants and pests/species grant.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$29,471:

In favor: 7 (Chair Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$29,471:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

3. Airport Security

Sheriff Tim Carroll spoke:

- Sheriff Carroll stated the FED's give \$54,000 back and another portion of Security Revenue (Cape Air) so the total Revenue is \$135,000.
- Structuring manpower at the Airport is being driven by the 911 event. Primarily, it's been one Full-time position and backfilled with Part-time to cover the hours because it is a seven day a week position to cover.
- A Deputy needs to be there for all boarding's of Cape Air. This is due to TSA does not have arrest powers and they are not armed. Through federal requirements for commercial flights they have to be armed and have to have the ability to arrest.
- The request is for a 40 hour position and also 30 hour position. With the demand from the Criminal Justice Academy it is becoming more difficult to get the Part-time law enforcement certification. A lot of time is needed to become certified which is hard for someone that has a family and current job. A consistent, Full-time Deputy is needed at the Airport and a Part-time position is needed to cover vacations, sick time etc. Going forward, the breakdown of the costs is how we will determine what the actual Security costs will be. We are trying to be as efficient as possible and think this is our best way to achieve this.
- Chair Duke asked, When checking out other regional airports (Hancock and Augusta) is this truly the best approach? There are two boarding's a day..... Airport Manager Northgraves spoke and stated there are three boarding's a day in the winter and six boarding's a day in the summer. Chair Duke did not realize this so he has no question.
- Budget Committee Member asked, do you get any backup coverage from Rockland Police Department or the State Police? Sheriff Carroll stated, we only receive a mutual aide type of service. Rockland has no authority at the Airport because they cover a different town. State Police would have to be contracted and this would cost a lot more. If a situation arose where we needed either of the departments to assist I'm sure they would both assist.
- Airport Manager Northgraves stated that the biggest expense is Healthcare. This is due to now covering two Full-time Healthcare eligible employees.
- There is another line at the top of Airport Security that states the Security Supervisor will be moved out of the Airport, and will now be assigned to the Sheriff's Department. 25% of that Deputy will be charged to the Airport budget. So if you look at the numbers and take out the Healthcare portion of it this is still making money. Since we are going thru personnel changes, we have to budget for the "highest cost/ full payment" Healthcare option that a new employee may take until we know what the new employee will actually choose.
- A Budget Committee Member wanted to make sure the bottom line for Airport Security is going to cost \$33,659 in 2020. That is what the anticipated costs will be if \$33,659? Sheriff said yes that is correct.
- A Budget Committee Member asked what the annual premium for full family health insurance is. Finance Director Robinson stated the cost is \$23,000.
- Finance Director Robinson wanted to add that being part of the Trust is to our advantage. If we were outside of the Trust we looking at doubling the increases if not more.
- A Commissioner stated that the Health Insurance is costly to the County, however; it is one of the advantages and benefits in our ability to attract top quality people to the County. If the benefits package were less attractive we would have more difficulty recruiting.
- Sheriff Carroll stated the increase in just the Corrections budget alone; the benefits were 96.5 % of the increase. Out of thousands of dollars, he only had control over \$5,000 of the total budget.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$33,659:

In favor: 7 (Chair Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$33,659:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

4. Airport

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves spoke:

- There have been significant changes this year in how we are budgeting for the Airport. When the Airport Manager started fifteen years ago there were two budgets which were Airport Maintenance and Airport Security. The reasoning at that time was because TSA reimbursed 100% of whatever was put in Airport Security. Over the years they quit doing that and now only reimburse a portion of what we actually spend, so we ended up combining the two. This year for 2020 we are going to separate them out again. This is mainly to get an idea of exactly what goes into the cost center of Airport Security. It is now pretty much a Sheriff's Department control budget that is under the Airport's total budget. We do get \$54,000 back from the FEDS.
- Airport Maintenance side – this is staying flat as far as wages go. Right now, there is an increase of \$36,000 to the Healthcare, as we have to assume the new Airport Manager will take the family plan. The new Airport Manager will start on January 12th of 2020.
- The new Airport Manager will start at Step 9, which is the maximum.
- Everything else pretty much staying the same. We are not purchasing deicing chemicals this year. It is bought once every two or three years.
- Also decreasing what's going into the AIP reserve acct. In 2019, we put in \$60,000 assuming we would get the double the grant out of the AIP, and we did not get that so we have about \$30,000 extra.
- Increase our Revenue by about \$63,000 this year. Airport Manager Northgraves only foresees this number going up in the future. That does not include some things that are on the horizon like the solar panel farm which will be a revenue generator, and developing new hangars which will also be a revenue generator.
- The only area that may be in jeopardy with this budget is the \$54,000 from TSA. We had a guarantee up until December of this year, it could get reapproved in March, but with TSA you never can tell.
- Budget Committee Member asked a question on the Electricity Line. What do you mean by the solar panels could mitigate? Airport Manager Northgraves stated that right now CMP's charges are going up, and the increase is costing us more every day for electricity. We are currently exploring a company to put in solar panels at the Airport. This will do two things, we can lease the land and that will give us revenue from the lease, and we would be part of their network and we would be able to get a savings in the cost of electricity. Right now, at the terminals we do not have an alternative power source other than twenty minute batteries so this will provide us an alternative power source.
- Chair Duke asked if this effort was going on right now. Airport Manager Northgraves stated that yes this is in the works.
- A Budget Committee Member asked that rent that you talked about is not in the budget right? Airport Manager Northgraves stated that is correct due to things have to be worked out. The option package that we are proposing to the Commission could possibly be a three year option.
- Another Budget Committee Member asked there is no back up electricity other than the twenty minute batteries. Airport Manager Northgraves said yes, for the terminal itself. We have generator power that takes care of the lights and runway.
- A Commissioner asked what you do about heat when you lose electricity in the wintertime. Airport Manager Northgraves stated that there is a boiler that can be manually operated. In almost ten years we haven't had an issue.

- A Budget Committee Member wondered about the feasibility of increasing the parking rates to increase revenue at the Airport. Airport Manager Northgraves stated that will stay pretty constant until they raise the rates. Those were last time rates were raised were in 2014. This summer the Rockland Ferry Terminal raised their rates significantly, so people parked at the Airport as it was cheaper for them. We are trying to figure a way to charge a large amount that exceed the Rockland Ferry Terminal in the summer and then allow Cape Air, Penobscot Island Air and Budget Rental Car to validate that price. In the coming year, there will be a package for the Commission to approve.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$2,122:

In favor: 7 (Chair Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$2,122:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

5. Insurance (Risk Pool):

Administrator Hart spoke:

- Our Risk Pool Insurance was \$81,252 which was down from \$83,552.
- We budgeted 3% which was recommended by the Risk Pool Manager, and were told it could come in at 2%.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$81,252:

In favor: 7 (Chair Duke, Barry Norris, Gayle Gallant, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$81,252:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman, Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

6. General Discussion of the 2020 Budget:

Administrator Hart spoke:

- This is the second draft which was replaced with the one that you had before.
- Essentially, the changes from the first draft were that we started out with a \$445,929 increase over last year, which was 5.66%. The draft you have tonight is \$400,984 or 5.09%.
- What changed was that we talked in a course of four meetings. Being loyal to LP gas which saved us about \$13,800 and that is for all facilities. LP gas was a big change and this came in at \$0.99 per gallon, compared to \$1.32 the year before.
- Workers Compensation was a drop of \$53,154. We had a 30.43% reduction in our Workers Comp from last year. I would give credit to the County Employees, the Safety Committee and Department Managers as a whole. Also, we ended up getting the Shape Certification County wide. When we

renewed last year we got it for the whole County. This really benefited our savings and Workers Comp too.

- Knox County had an \$11,579 reduction for Risk Pool Insurance for both the County portion and Jail Budget.
- There is a \$1,202 reduction in MCEDD based off the population for a Warrant adjustment.
- The cap is set based off the Property Growth Factor for the County and in the Budget voted on previously; there was a balance of \$39,185 that would get us to the cap. We put that back into the budget it's in the Capital section of the Budget. Due to the projects that we will have to do with the HVAC system going forward, we put that in there which will most likely lapse into Reserve. That money is going in because the statute allows it.
- The other change made was the discussion on the KRCC capital for the radio. We applied the balance that we had in the undesignated fund balance and reduced that. That was a \$49,280 reduction so there is \$28,000 and some change in the Capital line.
- One thing we still do not know about is "open enrollment" is open until November 15th, so we could have employees change Healthcare plans. This could be a slight adjustment or slight increase.

Questions/Comments:

- Chair Duke stated we have a net budget increase of \$400,000 and some change.
- We have taken straw votes on each budget. It might be helpful to have any type of conversation on any of the department's whether the Committee wants to revote any department.
- At this point and time the Budget Committee has voted not to support MCEDD.
- Chair Duke stated the question is, are there any other changes we need to make?
- Administrator Hart stated he went back and looked at the previous minutes, and it was a 2-4, 1 against and 4 abstentions.
- One Budget Committee Member decided to change the decision made to be "for" MCEDD.
- Another Budget Committee Member stated that the Selectmen have spoken in favor, and received a letter of approval from them. Still there has not been one citizen to say anything to indicate they are in favor or against of MCEDD. Absolutely zero input from the citizens.
- Administrator Hart stated it's really up to the Selectmen and Manager of each town to talk with the citizens of their communities. We had a public meeting on August 1st and invited many Municipalities, Selectmen and Managers to come so we could talk about MCEDD. In the meeting we discussed does the County want to do regional planning and create a department or do we want to contract it with MCEDD or do we not want to do anything at all. I feel the consensus at that meeting was that they supported the County with regional planning and comprehensive planning with MCEDD. We gage the towns to see whether they think we should provide the service on a county wide basis.
- A Budget Committee Member met with a Select Board this week, and thought they may be interested some point. One objection to MCEDD is that I have not seen what I consider is a compelling enough argument for the County to take this on when the Towns have been willing to do that and do their own work. I don't know what the County is getting; I see what the municipalities are getting.
- Airport Manager Northgraves stated as a member of the public, as a prior Planning Board Member, as a current Board of Appeals Member and as one of the members of the Executive Board for the MidCoast Regional Planning Commission, I can tell you right now that every town in the County will use MCEDD because MidCoast Regional Planning Commission is going away and folding up. They will be done of the 14th of next month. Once they are gone there is no one for them to go to except for MCEDD. MCEDD can complete all the planning work cheaper than any other planning business. MCEDD is already a functioning regional entity that can provide that regionalization
- A Budget Committee Member stated that we have already paid \$2,500 to them and that seemed like the bargain of the year! Now we're being asked to spend \$37,000 this year, as there is five other towns whom have already paid through the year.

- Airport Manager Northgraves stated it is \$2,500 for the County to be a member and most towns have already paid \$600.
- Another Budget Member wanted to pole how many municipalities have voted and informed us they are in favor? Washington paid \$600 already and they said its well worth it to them. We have had people who have changed their decision since last meeting.
- A Commissioner stated her thought was eleven and another Commissioner agreed.
- A Budget Committee Member stated that twelve communities could have bought in but they chose not to.
- Another Commissioner stated no, that was not the case. Some of the communities to be fair were not aware of the services they could avail themselves of. For example the Town Manager of North Haven would be interested in some of the services. Not all have not joined because they don't want to they need to know what MCEDD can offer.
- A Budget Committee Member stated a Select board meeting was attended recently for almost fifty minutes. This Budget Committee Member was grilled about MCEDD, when he was told he was coming to the meeting to explain the process of the Knox County Budget. At one point, I made the statement six out of eighteen communities had signed up and was told point blank that I was wrong. I verified my information again today. One of the Select Board Members said they had been at a meeting at Lincoln County where just about every community in Knox County had representatives there taking the information and knowledge. So, for people to say that these towns aren't aware I find it a little disingenuous.
- Another Budget Committee Member stated that these communities did not need to join MCEDD because they had MidCoast Regional Planning. That's the big difference.
- A Commissioner spoke and said for someone who represents a municipality, and is already a member of MCEDD it is beyond me why you would vote against it. It is the same amount of money. If a town if already paying for a membership through their municipal budget, so that would be transferred not offloaded. The extremely significant part of this is if we join as a County, the County then becomes available for using all of the resources of MCEDD.
- A Commissioner stated that opportunity to buy the Communication equipment with a grant; this would give us substantial savings. Purchasing the new Communications equipment will eventually be the case with all towns in Knox County, and by joining it would be represent substantial savings. I think that while our constituents and taxpayers see the direct benefit, there is an indirect benefit that will come through all of us being members of MCEDD. Specifically as it pertains to the Grant opportunity .If you are a non-member of MCEDD you cannot participate in the Federal Grant program. In reading though MCEDDs report, the municipalities that are supporting MCEDD are recipients of approximately \$1.1 million dollars in Grants. Rockport obtained a Northern Boarder Grant in the amount of \$250,000 for a sewer project, Rockland received \$350,000 for the fish pier project, Thomaston received a Northern Boarder Grant in the amount of \$250,000 to complete their downtown renovation project and South Thomaston just obtained a Northern Boarder Grant in the amount of \$330,000 for their road project. Looking to the future I think this is a smart investment for us. It's a small cost today. It will result in a lot of benefits for Knox County down the road.
- A Budget Committee Member would like to hear more information from another source. At this point, their vote will most likely be changed to being in favor of MCEDD.
- Chair Duke said just so everyone knows, because there have been vacillations on the votes we are going to revote MCEDD.
- A Budget Committee Member stated at the end of the day we vote on a total budget.
- Chair Duke spoke and said the **Budget Committee only** will take another straw vote on MCEDD. Prior to our meeting I said we would take straw votes on every department, unless there is a change and then I'd like to revote a department or a line prior to the final vote. I am not re-voting on the rest of the departments unless the Committee wants to. Our last vote on MCEDD included a lot of abstentions thus the straw re-vote.

Straw re-vote on Administrator's budget recommendation for MCEDD:

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$37,289:

In favor: 6 (Chair Duke, Shawn Levasseur, Gayle Gallant, Barry Norris, Thomas Marshall, Jr. and Roger Peabody.)

Against: 0 (Shawn Levasseur)

Abstained: 2 (Randy Stearns & Nick Lapham)

- A Budget Committee Member questioned the tax cap. Administrator provided an explanation. The Budget Committee Member would like to see this below 5%.
- Administrator Hart stated if the Budget Committee and Commissioners decided to they could move the \$39,185 from the Corrections Capital line and then the tax cap would be at 4.95%. Again, that would be their decision.
- A Budget Committee Member asked which of the departments have to remain within their own budget. For instance, Communications, I saw something where looking to take the \$49,000 from Reserves to lower the budget for them. What happens if they have something happen during the year? Does this mean they have no Reserve or can they pull from the General Surplus?
- Administrator Hart stated there is some money in Surplus and could also go to the Commissioners on an emergency basis. We could use contingency in a real emergency.
- Airport Manager Northgraves spoke and stated the Airport can still use County money but we have to go to the Commissioners for them to move it. Once it goes into the Airport it has to stay there.
- A Commissioner talked about addressing Finance Director Robinson regarding the financial perspective of needing a secure surplus.
- Finance Director Robinson stated there are four different surpluses which are Airport, Communications, Jail and all other departments fall under the General Fund. From a statute perspective as well as audit recommendation is that we keep surplus at 20%. When we are talking about surplus we are talking about all four of those rolling into one number to be the 20%. That's what we are looking for. Ideally, we would like each of the four to be at 20%, but it usually does not work that way. The other piece is that the surplus helps with our cash flow throughout the year. We have our tax money; all of our funding comes in September and really November. Yet, we have a \$9 million budget that we have to fund throughout the year. We do get a tax anticipation note, but usually that's running \$3.5 - \$3.7 million because it's based on a formula as to what we can request to borrow. So, on top of the recommendation of being 20% we really need that surplus to help us with our cash flow to make it through until we get our tax money to commit. The other piece is that when we are talking about the percentages they seem sometimes overly high. For example, when you are looking at the Airport at 15%, which is \$86,000. If there is one piece of major equipment that breaks at the Airport that we do not have budgeted, that \$86,000 really is not that much at that point.
- Sheriff Carroll stated he has some concern about the cap. There is a lot of discussion going on at the Criminal Justice Public Safety Committee up in Augusta with the Maine Judges Association, Maine County Commissioners Association and another Association. The State is trying to figure out what sort of number that they are responsible for to help fund the jails. I'm afraid if we do not go to the cap that we are allowed to go to, they are going to say, "I guess you don't need all money that we are providing" and they'll take that money too.
- A Commissioner stated that the Sheriff talked about 98% of his budget he had absolutely no control over. Based on just the personnel cost for the County with the Step system and cost of living increase it looks like there's a built in 3% increase right there. We are having a discussion right now of what is the acceptable limit and do we cap it at 5%. This is something to consider and should this be a guidance level.
- Chair Duke stated that 5% is unacceptable. 5% is a very high percentage increase. We have been averaging for the last four years 4%. This is an anomaly. I would like to see a breakdown of the cost for the \$130,000 for the Public Safety Building.
- Administrator Hart stated that for the outside the cost is around \$20-\$25,000.

- Chair Duke said where the significant issue is when you walk on the tiles is in the EMA office. The thing to do would be to deal with the EMA office one year, and deal with the Sheriff's Department another year. This is just a suggestion and yes it would carve the budget down.
- Administrator Hart stated he would rather keep the \$130,000 there due to next year you could have \$150,000 payment for the Jail. The interest rates are lower right now.
- We need to vote for this budget as it stands or take a cleaver to the moisture issue at the Public Safety Building.
- A Budget Committee Member said we should leave it as it. This would not be good budgeting. We should leave the \$130,000 where it is this way next year the bite isn't as bad when something else arises. I don't want to pass on next year what should be fixed this year.
- A Commissioner would love to see the overlay of \$165,540. It's a 2% overlay. In the budget summary the use of General Funds Surplus to reduce tax commitment of the Administrators recommendation of \$158,000 just happens to be the amount that was the overlay from last year. If the overlay is not used then the amount is applied to the following year.
- Administrator Hart stated that if you did that it would save on all the municipalities' County tax, it doesn't lower the Budget. It does lower the County tax assessment.
- Chair Duke asked if there was any other discussion about the Budget. Are there any numbers of any Budgets that we want to change?

Straw re-vote on the Administrator's proposed net Budget:

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's proposed 2020 Budget recommendation of \$8,276,981:

In favor: 8 (Chair Duke, Gayle Gallant, Barry Norris, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the Commissioners on whether to approve the Administrator's proposed 2020 Budget recommendation of \$8,276,981:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman and Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

Straw re-vote on the Administrator's budget recommendation for Communications:

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$1,293,291:

In favor: 8 (Chair Duke, Gayle Gallant, Barry Norris, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Thomas Marshall, Jr.)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$1,293,291:

In favor: 3 (Commissioner Parent, Commissioner Pohlman and Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

- *Administrator Hart asked that anyone that will not be here on the final meeting on December 5th needs to drop off their Budget binders. Please note that the meeting on December 5th will be at 6:00 P.M.*

VI. Adjourn

- *Randy Stearns made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Barry Norris seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Meriwether made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

The next Public Hearing and Final Vote of the 2020 Knox County Budget with the Budget Committee & Commission will be held on **December 5th @ 6:00 P.M.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:48 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee and Knox County Commission approved these minutes
at the Joint Meeting held on December 5th, 2019.**